Radical Policy Changes on Value Added Services of DOT

3635. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a radical policy shift on value added services, which include radio paging and cellular phones is considered to be the only way out of the present mess wherein the Department of Telecommunication has been dragged to the court of law for its decision to award contracts to eight short listed companies as reported in the Economic Times, New Delhi dated the 30th July, 1993;

(b) whether Government propose to consult the Ministry of Law and Justice before any decision is taken to open to foreign investors the telecom infrastructure and ensure that only companies with a long term perspective for the country get in;

(c) whether Government propose to introduce the era of liberalisation/privatisation at one go or at present limited to the four metropolitan cities of Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta and through the circuitous route of public sector corporation; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) At present there is no policy shift in franchising value added services including radio paging and cellular phones. Some suggestions regarding award of licence for value added services including radio paging and cellular phones have been received which are under consideration. Final decision in this regard is yet to be taken.

(b) At present valued services including radio paging and cellular phones have been thrown open to Indian registered companies for franchising these services on a non-exclusive basis. Indian registered companies may have foreign collaboration. At present there is no change in this policy.

(c) and (d) Value added services have been thrown open to Indian registered companies private as well public sector companies and there is no circuitous route of public sector corporations for these services. Initially tenders have been invited to provide & operate cellular phone service in four cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras & radio paging service in 27 cities. Based on the experience gained, these services may be extended to other cities in future. Other value added services have been thrown open on all India and continuous basis.

STD/ISD Booth lying Idle in A.I.I.M.S. Delhi

3636. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of P.C.O. booths which are functioning in the Union Territory of Delhi and out of them how many have been allotted to handicapped person;

(b) whether any STD/ISD booth is lying idle in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi allotted to a commercial organisation;

(c) whether Government propose to allot this idle STD/ISD booth to one of the educated handicapped who had applied for it; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard, if not, the reasons therefor and what are the guidelines for allotting the ISD/STD booths in the Union Territory of Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) The total No. of PCOs functioning in the Union Territory of Delhi as on 1-8-93 is 15537 and out them 846 PCOs have been allotted to handicapped persons.

(b) Two such STD/ISD PCO booths are lying idle and one is lying disconnected due to non-payment at AIIMS.

(c) and (d) So far no educated unemployed handicapped person has applied for allotment of STD/ISD PCO booth at A.I.I.M.S. This STD/ISD PCO can be allotted to any educated unemployed handi-

capped person and A.I.I.M.S. will be requested to allot the booth to the person to whom PCO is sanctioned.

STD Facilities in the Tribal and Rural Areas

3637. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps have been taken by Government to provide telephone and STD facilities in the tribal and rural areas in the country; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which these facilities would be provided to these areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The 8th Plan proposals of the Department provide for provision of telephones practically on demand in rural and tribal areas and also provision of STD facilities to all telephone exchanges by 1-4-97. Accordingly 24.3 lakh lines of Gross Switching Capacity of small and medium type is planned in Rural/Semi Urban areas during the plan period.

(b) The Question does not arise.

Improvement of Telephone Service during the Eighth Five Year Plan

3638. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state what steps are being taken by Government to improve the telephone situation in the country during the eighth five year plan particularly in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): To improve the telephone situation in the country including Uttar Pradesh. The 8th Plan of the department of telecommunication envisages:

— Provide telephone practically on demand in rural and tribal areas & waiting period for telephone connections not to exceed two years in other areas.

— Provide phone facility in all Gram Panchayats by 1-4-1995. Some more villages to have LDPTs by 1-4-1997.

— Public Call Offices for every 100 households in urban areas.

— Highway telephones on national highways at 10 Km. distance.

— Replacement of life expired and worn out equipment by electronic equipment.

— Practically all new equipment proposed for induction during the 8th plan period to be of digital type.

— Computerisation of Telecommunication services such as directory enquiry, billing, manual trunk services etc.

— Replacement of all strowger MAX III exchanges by electronic exchanges.

— Provision of Subscriber Trunk Dialling facility to all exchanges.

— To meet the above objectives it is proposed to add 93 lakh lines of net switching capacity in the country Including around 5.30 lakh lines in U.P. during 92-97. This is subject to availability of resources and infrastructure.

Post Offices likely to be opened in Almora District of Uttar Pradesh

3639. MAULANA OBAIDULIAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of post offices likely to be opened in District Almora (U.P.) in the current financial year;

(b) what are the names of places where these post offices are likely to be opened and

(c) whether Government would consider the proposal to open one sub-post office at Basot which will cater to the needs of a large number of residents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) During Annual Plan 1993-94, a target for opening of 93